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RELICS OF KING ST. STEFAN MILUTIN DRESSED AND PROCESSED THROUGH STREETS OF SOFIA FOR 700TH ANNIVERSARY



On Friday, the relics of the Serbian King St. Stefan Milutin were carried in procession throughout the streets of the Bulgarian capital, on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his repose in the Lord.

Though he ruled Serbia from 1275 to 1320, his relics have been treasured in the metropolitan cathedral in Sofia for seven centuries. His feast is celebrated as the cathedral's second patronal feast, reports the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

According to tradition, a hierarchical Divine Liturgy was served the day before, with the re-dressing of the saint's holy relics. The service was celebrated by His Grace Bishop Polycarp of Belogradchik, vicar of the Metropolis of Sofia, with local and visiting clergy.

Following the Liturgy, the greetings of His Holiness Patriarch Neofit were read out,

in which he reminded that, like St. Stefan, all who are baptized are called to perfection and holiness.

Following the Liturgy, the rite of the solemn adorning of the relics began. As the clergy and people sang the canon and akathist to St. Stefan, his precious remains were removed from his reliquary and carried into the altar, where they were redressed.

Having been adorned with new robes, the relics were then placed in a reliquary, which was then carried in procession out of the church and through the streets of Sofia. The procession eventually made its way back to the cathedral, where the relics were returned to their permanent reliquary. Bp. Polycarp read a special prayer to St. Stefan, and all the people venerated the relics.

Addressing the gathered clergy and faithful, Bp. Polycarp noted that this was the first time St. Stefan's relics were carried in procession, in celebration of the 700th anniversary of his repose.

"May we always approach his holy relics with grace, joy and inspiration, and may God support and bless us through his prayers!" the hierarch exhorted.







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